



(U) Perspectives from a Summer Intern

FROM: [REDACTED]
Intelligence Analyst Summer Intern Program
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(U) I stared across the desk at the retired Admiral. Although I often sought advice from my professors in graduate school, it wasn't often -- or ever -- that I met with former directors of the NSA. As one of my current professors at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin, [Bobby Inman](#) had an opinion on a matter that I truly valued: what it was like to work at the NSA.

(U) I was looking for an internship to fill my time during the summer months and had great offers from the NSA, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in the President's office, and the General Accounting Office (GAO). My criteria for the experience were fairly simple. In the wake of 9/11, my major reason for going to graduate school to study public policy in the fall 2002 was to position myself to serve my country. I also wanted to work in the Washington metro area. And of course, being a struggling grad student meant an all-important necessity: a paycheck. Fortunately (or perhaps unfortunately for the decision process), all three offers met these standards.

(U) Thus I turned to the Admiral, and it was his opinion that sealed the deal. He laid it out in simple terms for me: **the NSA was his all-time favorite job**. Having served a tour as an intelligence analyst (IA) at NSA while rising in the ranks of the Navy, VADM Inman had a more diverse background than most -- if not all -- university professors. He worked at a wide variety of stops in the public sector -- including a tour as the deputy director at the CIA -- and later served in executive positions for private sector companies. In a word, VADM Inman's work experience was expansive and I trusted his insight. I wanted a place that I would enjoy working, and thus signed up for the 2004 intelligence analyst summer intern program (NETA 2007).

(U) The internship is unique in that about half of the program consists of classes and briefings, and the other half is made up of a project that interns work on throughout the summer. Due to the brief stint of internships, the "intern experience" at various companies and government agencies throughout the world is often generalized in a negative light -- i.e. inefficiencies and slow days for the intern result in filing or the twiddling of thumbs. Yet the NSA has done something highly intelligent and commendable: invested a great deal of time and resources into the sixteen IA summer interns. A cost-benefit analysis of this program would be interesting to see, as almost every IA summer intern from years past has returned to work as a full-time IA, going through the three-year intern training program. But recruiting and retention is not the only benefit; the returnees are one-step (or many) ahead of other incoming IA interns because of the many courses taken throughout the summer.

(U) After five short weeks in the program, I can wholeheartedly conclude that this experience has been tremendously worthwhile. First, it has allowed an insightful glimpse at the NSA and the entire intelligence community. I have learned about many important research tools and seen in great depth how the NSA operates at the macro- and micro-levels. Second, I have observed something that is quite unique in the working world. VADM Inman is not the only one that holds the NSA as his "all-time favorite job." Here at NSA, I have found that most feel that way. And for this intern, that's an awesome thing to see.

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